

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 01260 150807Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 CU-04 TRSE-00 /091 W
-----020977 150835Z /16

R 150728Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9320
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1260

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR PINT KS KN
SUBJ: DEVELOPMENTS IN ROK POLICY ON REUNIFICATION

SUMMARY: ROKG ACKNOWLEDGES THAT REUNIFICATION IS A MATTER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. PRESIDENT PAK URGES STRONGER PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM, TO REFLECT CONTINUING OFFICIAL INTEREST, BUT GENERAL PUBLIC APPEARS TO REGARD SUBJECT AS ACADEMIC QUESTION. WHILE THEORETICAL INTEREST REMAINS, REUNIFICATION SEEMS TO HAVE LOST ITS IMPORTANCE AS A CURRENT FACTOR IN ROK FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING PRESIDENT PAK'S ANNUAL INSPECTION VISIT TO THE NATIONAL UNIFICATION BOARD, FEBRUARY 9, MINISTER OF NATIONAL UNIFICATION YI YONG-HUI SAID IN HIS FORMAL BRIEFING THAT, GIVEN NORTH KOREAN POLICIES, THE PROSPECTS FOR TERRITORIAL UNIFICATION ARE NOT BRIGHT, AND IT IS NOW NECESSARY TO PREPARE FOR THE EVENTUALITY THAT UNIFICATION MAY BE DELAYED TO THE NEXT GENERATION. PRESIDENT PAK,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 01260 150807Z

IN HIS STATEMENT, ACKNOWLEDGED THE UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS FOR ACTUAL UNIFICATION, AND STRESSED THE STATUS OF THE ROK AS THE LEGITIMATE HEIR TO THE KOREAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL TRADITION. HE ALSO DIRECTED THE BOARD TO INITIATE A MORE ACTIVE INFORMATION PROGRAM AIMED AT EDUCATING THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON UNIFICATION POLICY.

2. DISCUSSING THIS EXCHANGE WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER, DIRECTOR HAN YONG-CHOL OF THE REUNIFICATION BOARD POLICY RESEARCH OFFICE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MINISTER YI'S COMMENT ABOUT LEAVING THE MATTER TO FUTURE GENERATIONS WENT BEYOND PREVIOUS ROKG STATEMENTS ON THE SUBJECT. HAN SAID, HOWEVER, THAT YI WAS IN FACT ONLY STATING WHAT PRACTICALLY ALL KOREANS HAVE BELIEVED FOR SOME TIME. HE ADDED THAT IN HIS VIEW VERY FEW KOREANS REALLY THINK MUCH ABOUT REUNIFICATION, REGARDING IT AS SO REMOTE A PROSPECT AS TO HAVE NO REAL IMPORTANCE FOR MOST. PRESIDENT PAK'S CALL FOR AN INTENSIFIED PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM, HAN ATTRIBUTED TO THE POLITICAL NEED, IN AN ELECTION YEAR, TO DEMONSTRATE THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT.

3. AS FOR PAK'S COMMENTS ON LEGITIMACY, HAN NOTED THAT THERE WAS AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN PAK'S VIEW AND THE CONCEPT OF JOINT ADMISSION TO THE UN. HAN STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT PARALLEL STATUS IN THE UN WAS OFFICIALLY VIEWED AS AN INTERIM MEASURE TO PRESERVE PEACE ON THE PENINSULA, AND SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS CONSTITUTING RECOGNITION OF THE NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT AS A PERMANENT LEGITIMATE ENTITY.

4. HAN'S ESTIMATE OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES ON THIS ISSUE COINCIDES CLOSELY WITH OTHER EMBASSY OBSERVATIONS. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME EDITORIALS ON THE FEBRUARY 9 EXCHANGE, GENERALLY SUPPORTING THE VIEWS EXPRESSED. THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO WORK OF ANY STATEMENTS BY POLITICAL FIGURES OR PARTIES ON THE SUBJECT, NOR

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 01260 150807Z

HAS MUCH INTEREST BEEN EXPRESSED IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS.

5. THE VIEW THAT REUNIFICATION IS A MATTER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS WAS EXPRESSED PUBLICLY LAST FALL IN SOME SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY THE REUNIFICATION BOARD. IT HAS BEEN CRITICIZED IN RECENT WEEKS BY PYONGYANG, BUT THE REACTION IN THE ROK HAS GENERALLY BEEN ACQUIESCENT. MOST COMMENTARY LAST FALL AND THIS YEAR HAS FOCUSED ON THE INCREASING SOCIAL DIVERGENCIES BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS OF KOREA AS A FURTHER BARRIER TO ULTIMATE REUNIFICATION.

6. ALTHOUGH THE IDEA OF EARLY REUNIFICATION WAS ONCE AN ARTICLE OF FAITH FOR THE ROKG, THE KOREAN WAR AND THE NEARLY TOTAL ABSENCE OF CONTACT SINCE THAT TIME HAVE MEANT THAT A NEW GENERATION OF KOREANS HAS GROWN UP WITHOUT TIES TO THE NORTH. THE REUNIFICATION ISSUE, THEREFORE, HAS NOT RETAINED THE EMOTIONAL IMPORTANCE FOR KOREANS THAT IT SEEMS TO HAVE HAD, FOR INSTANCE, FOR THE GERMANS. KOREANS, ASKED ABOUT REUNIFICATION THESE DAYS, TEND TO SWITCH THE SUBJECT TO RELATIONS WITH THE US WHICH THEY REGARD AS A MUCH MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE. THUS, WHILE THE UNIFICATION CONCEPT RETAINS STANDING AS AN IDEAL, IT APPEARS TO HAVE LOST ITS IMPORTANCE AS A POLITICAL ISSUE, AND IS PROBABLY NO LONGER A MAJOR CURRENT FACTOR IN ROK FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS.

STERN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, TERRITORIAL REVERSION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SEOUL01260
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780069-0296
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780252/aaaabrtx.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9fdef2d8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3586032
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEVELOPMENTS IN ROK POLICY ON REUNIFICATION SUMMARY: ROKG ACKNOWLEDGES THAT REUNIFICATION IS A MATTER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. PRESIDENT PAK URGES ST RONGER P
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, KS, KN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9fdef2d8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014